



Washington State Legislature

August 25, 2015

Vikki Wachino, Director
Center for Medicaid and State Operations
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Mail Stop S2-26-12
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850

Dear Ms. Wachino:

We are writing to express our support for Washington state's application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a section 1115 Medicaid Transformation Demonstration waiver.

With bipartisan leadership from our colleagues on the House and Senate health care committees, the State Legislature has established transformational policy direction for the Medicaid program. Legislation in 2013 established standard measures of performance and accountability across Medicaid delivery systems and in 2014 we set our state on course to achieve full integration of physical and behavioral health services by 2020. In addition, we have directed the Health Care Authority and Department of Social and Health Services to implement value-based purchasing, with the goal of having 80% of all state health care dollars in such contracts by 2020.

We believe this waiver is an important tool for achieving the broad and transformative aims that have been established for Washington's Medicaid program. In our state, Medicaid has grown at a significant rate due to the expansion. The delivery system is stretched and must transform to ensure the sustainability of the program. The looming age wave threatens the viability of our rebalanced long-term care system if proactive steps are not taken soon.


Washington state has a long tradition of initiatives that have reformed health care delivery through evidence-based practices, expanded access to coverage and care for vulnerable populations, and embraced value-based purchasing principles. Our state is prepared to take on this new challenge of transforming and preserving the Medicaid program for the over 1.7 million people we now serve.

To move Washington forward on its mission to create better health, better care at a lower cost for Medicaid enrollees, we urge CMS to enter negotiations with the state as soon as possible. We will be following the progress closely and stand ready to support this effort through any available means.

Sincerely,


Representative Eileen Cody, Chair
House Health Care and Wellness


Senator David Frocht, Ranking
Senate Health Care Committee


Representative Paul Harris, Member
House Health Care and Wellness